



## How Employers Can Involve Unions in Work-Based Learning

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Local unions are a valuable resource for making work-based learning experiences successful for both students and employees. With their expertise in apprenticeship training and employee relations, union representatives can help create effective learning opportunities for young people. And, involving local labor representatives can help build a strong sense of interest and ownership in work-based learning among employees.

Ways employers can involve local unions in work-based learning include the following:

- ☐ Solicit the participation of union representatives as they can
  - Be very helpful in implementing and overseeing work-based learning activities.
  - Act as a contact person to answer questions for employees as they work with students.
  - Suggest ways to recruit participants based on their knowledge of employee's interests and concerns regarding working with young people.
- ☐ Seek lessons learned from local union representatives.
  - Many labor organizations have adopted resolutions on work-based learning and participate in councils geared toward education reform.
  - Their experience can provide helpful information to employers on how to work effectively with schools and provide students with valuable learning and experience at the worksite.
  - They may have useful advice on how to help employers start work-based learning activities, based on lessons learned from their own programs.
- ☐ Include union representatives in planning activities with the school.
  - Involve them in conversations with the school regarding the type and scope of the work-based experience.
  - Encourage them to play an active role with the school in building or expanding work-based learning within their company or among others.
  - Enlist them to participate on curriculum advisory committees or program oversight boards.
- ☐ Invite union representatives to help coordinate and participate in work-based learning orientations sessions. The orientation session is an opportunity for school contacts to present the goals and expectations of work-based learning to employers and employees in an effort to prepare them for working with students. The orientation should cover such topics as:
  - Roles and responsibilities of partners
  - Adolescent behavior
  - Mentoring skills
  - Support services for employees
  - Insurance and liability
  - Child labor laws
  - Confidentiality